(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) As on 1.10.2003, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) were operating 515 LPG distributorships in the State of Gujarat. Consequent upon the dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM), Government have allowed OMCs to set up LPG distributorships at new locations as per their commercial considerations in all the States including Gujarat.

Products missing from HPCL Refinery

2274. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL be pleased to state:

(a)whether the audit authority has found that finished oil products worth Rs. 89 crores went missing from HPCL Mumbai Refinery; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Oil which had partially been consumed as internal fuel, lying in sludge, pipeline fill or transferred to marketing terminals was found to be wrongly recorded as lying in refinery tanks. This inventory variation amounted to Rs. 84.8 crore for a quantum of 70.6 thousand metric tonnes of inventories and was detected during a physical verification of inventorties last year in October, 2002. No evidence of theft/pilferage was found.

Disciplinary action has been initiated by Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited against the employees responsible for wrong recording of inventories Producers/controls in oil movement and storage area have been strengthened by the Company.

The inventory variation has also been given effect to in the accounts of the Company for the year 2002-2003 as well as reported in the Annual Report.

Entry of Private Companies in retailing

2275. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of private oil companies which have been given authorisation for the setting up of retail outlets for petrol;

(b) the number of retail outlets which have been set up by each of those companies; and

(c) whether ONGC has also been allowed to set up retail outlets and if so, the details thereof including the number of such outlets set up so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Government have granted authorisation for marketing the transportation fuel to two private companies namely; M/s. Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and M/s. Essar Oil Limited (EOL). In addition, in principle approval has been given to M/s. Shell India Pvt. Ltd., subject to fulfilment of conditions.

(b) M/s. EOL has commissioned three Retail Outlets (ROs) whereas M/s. RIL has not commissioned any RO, so far.

(c) Oil an Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has been allowed to set up 1,100 ROs but has not set up any RO, so far.

Major helicopter accidents involving ONGC

2276. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of major helicopter accidents involving the staff of ONGC which took place during the last three years;